

VHA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships (HAP) and the Veteran Sponsorship Partnership Network (VSPN)

How Volunteers Can Facilitate Veteran Reentry to Civilian Life

The Veteran Health Administration (VHA)'s **Veteran Sponsorship Partnership Network (VSPN)** initiative is based on the model of the **DoD sponsorship program**. As part of this initiative, Veterans, Veteran spouses, and the community that supports Veterans and Service members are volunteering as sponsors to support Service members throughout their transition back into civilian communities. Keep reading to learn more about the role these sponsors play, as well as the benefits to joining this network and how it helps support Service members, Veterans, and their families.

Why become a sponsor?

VHA created the VSPN initiative to leverage the power of public-private partnerships to help transitioning service members and their families access VA services and community resources, such as employment opportunities, education benefits, housing assistance, and more. Volunteering to become a sponsor for Service members means making a difference by:

- Helping a Service member before, during, and after transitioning into your community by keeping in touch with them and helping to answer questions they might have.
- Connecting a Service member and their family to local resources that can aid in securing employment, educational, and housing opportunities, such as local chapters of Veteran service organizations, Veteran Service Officers (VSO), County Service Officers, Vet Centers, and VA medical centers.



Sponsors ultimately provide peer support for Veterans and help them access quality benefits, whole health care, and services to improve experiences, wellbeing, and outcomes.

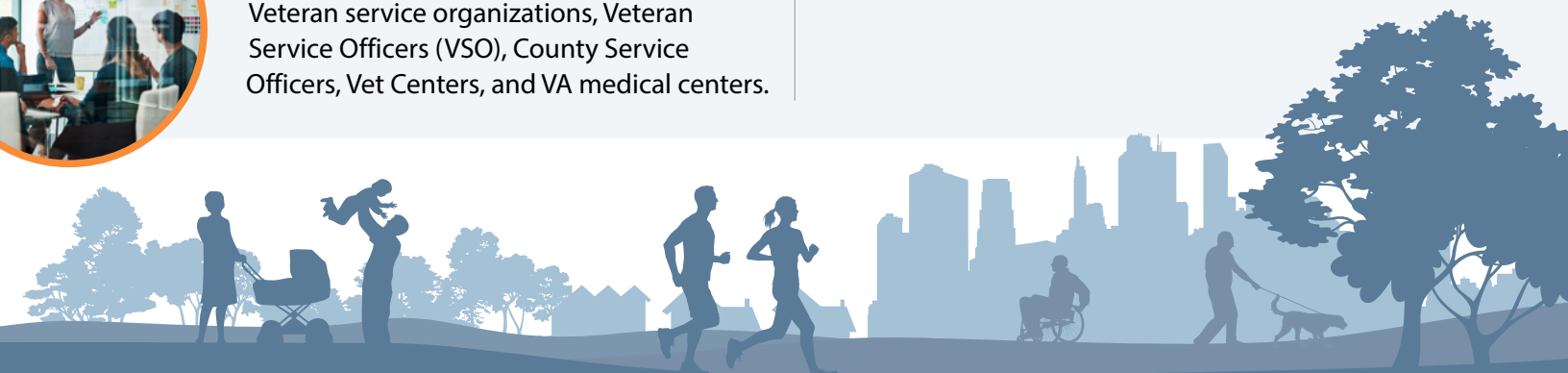
Who can become a sponsor?

Anyone can become a sponsor. You do not need to already be a volunteer for a community organization to become a sponsor. Prior experience in the military or with sponsorship is not required. Veterans and non-Veterans who care about Service members and Veterans, and can commit the time to complete the recommended training, make great sponsors. This means Veterans, Veteran spouses, VSO members, State or County Veterans affairs offices, VA employees, and the broader population of community volunteers are all welcome.



Benefits for Service members

- Making a positive difference in a Veteran or Service member's life.



VA



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- Growing your community by strengthening connections between Veterans, neighbors, VA, and local organizations.
- Service members who have support (such as a sponsor or easy access to community resources) experience less stress and have better outcomes during the transition back into civilian communities. Early research indicates engaging in VHA care with community-based interventions and sponsorships set Veterans up for success across social determinants of health — like employment, economic stability, education, transportation, and reduced risk factors related to Veteran death by suicide.
- VA provides free training for sponsors, which is available at no cost by signing up to become a sponsor through the Expiration Term of Service (ETS) Sponsorship Program (ETS-SP).

Responsibilities of sponsoring a Veteran

- Sign up to be a sponsor by visiting: etssponsorship.com/signup/sponsor/.
- Attend three free virtual trainings, for 7.5 hours of total instruction time.
- After completing training, attend at least one hour-long virtual professional development class quarterly.
- Communicate with the appropriate VA community partner about additional support for your paired Veteran or service requests.
- Support Veterans or Service members as they identify goals and develop a Transition Action Plan to smooth reentry to civilian life.
- Share local area knowledge with paired Veteran or service member and assist with connecting to resources like VA programs and local community programs.
- Coordinate opportunities for Veteran or service members to meet others at community partner or VA-organized events.

Innovative Strategic Partnerships Facilitated through HAP

The mission of the VHA National Center for Healthcare Advancement and Partnerships (formerly known as the Office of Community Engagement) is to serve as a trusted resource and a catalyst for the growth of effective partnerships at the national, state, and community level and advances the health and wellbeing of Veterans through exploration of innovative, safe, and ethical emerging therapies.

To learn more about the VSPN, please visit: va.gov/HEALTHPARTNERSHIPS/vspn.asp

To learn more about VHA partnerships, please visit: va.gov/healthpartnerships.

Disclaimer: Sponsors are not managed by VA. Individuals who wish to become a sponsor do so by signing up as a volunteer with a non-VA organization. VA does not endorse and is not responsible for sponsors or organizations that manage sponsors. Sponsors are trained with materials provided by VA in collaboration with an academic affiliate. The appearance of external hyperlinks does not constitute an endorsement by the Department of Veterans Affairs of the linked websites, or the information, products, or services contained therein. Veterans and members of the public are encouraged to adhere to current CDC guidelines pertaining to the COVID-19 pandemic.

